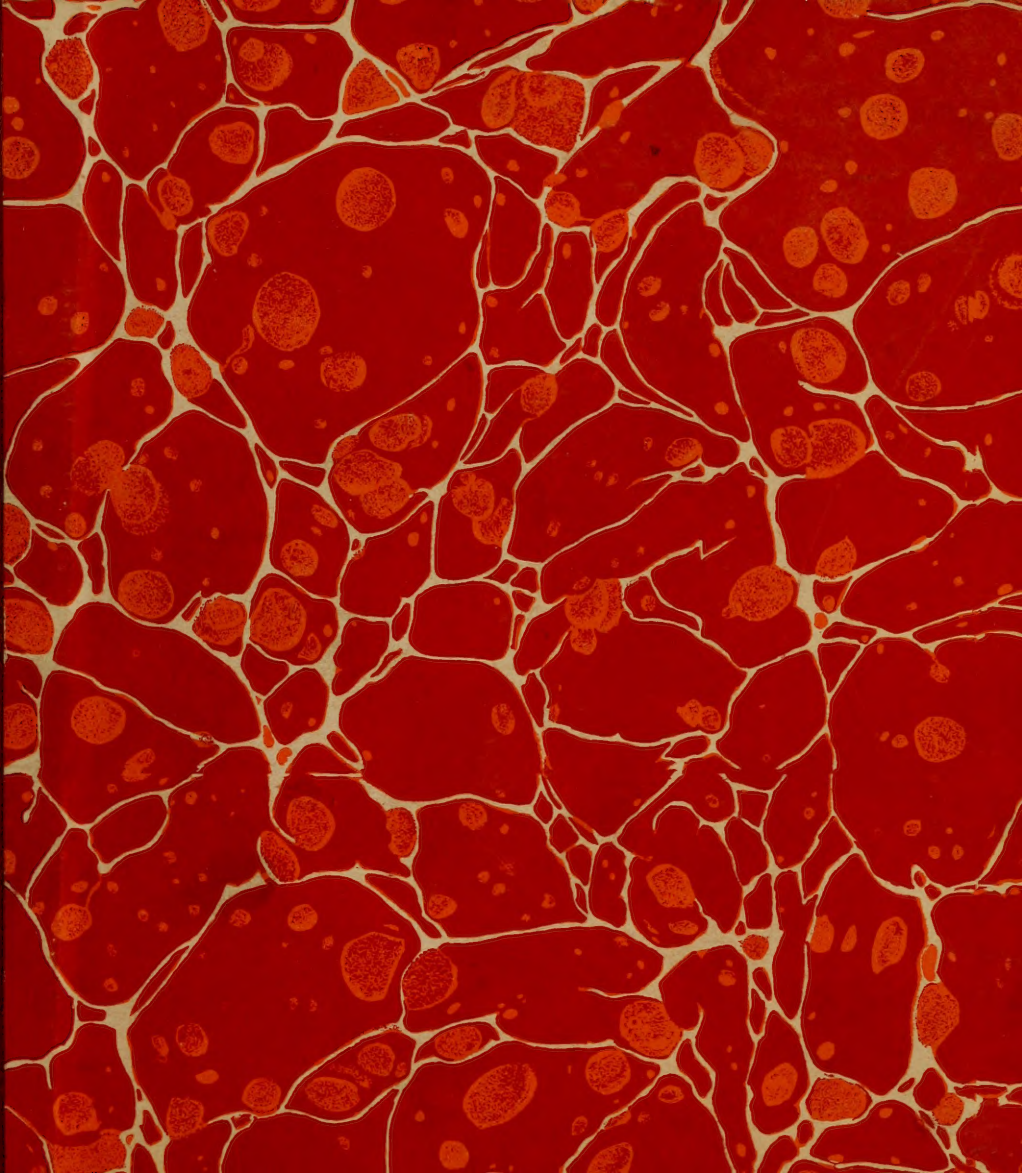
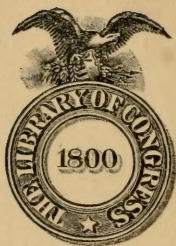


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LEGEND OF THE



LEWIS CAVERNS

Founded Upon the discovery
of a skeleton in one of its chambers
By
PAULINE CARRINGTON RUST.

Published AND Designed

By

LOUGHEADE & CO.

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FEB 17 1941

Ad. fe. 27-41

1302 Hilbert St.

Feb. 22, 1887.

Dear Mr. Carson,

In my visit to Luray Cave, in the summer of 1880, I had the opportunity of seeing and satisfying myself of the authenticity of the human bones, found embedded in the rocky floor of the cave. The bones of the bear, which infests caves, bear so near a resemblance to human bones that they are often mistaken for such when found under similar circum-

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stances. Then however I recog-
nized as the femur and tibia
of an adult man, partially
embedded and partially protruding
from the rock. In our recent
visit together, I found the same
bones much mutilated and
scarcely recognizable. At

your request I broke off a fragment
of the femur for examination. It
is chalky and friable and strongly
adherent to a portion of the rocky
crust. I observe that its con-
dition of preservation is identical


with that of bones of the extinct
peccary and the associated
animals found under sim-
ilar circumstances in the
cave deposits of Virginia,
and this has led me to con-
jecture that the man of
Luray is more ancient
than has been supposed, and
probably belonged to a
prehistoric race.

Sincerely yours,

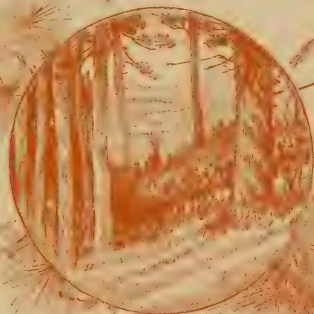
Joseph Leidy.



THE LEGEND.



Long, bright shafts of yellow sunshine
Cleft the mountains purple height,
Spanned in lines of broken glory
All Gerandos' rushing night.



Shot in quivering golden arrows
Through the sombre, sighing pines,
And were lost amid the forest,
In the shadows' deepening lines.

**Original name of the Skezunadock River.*



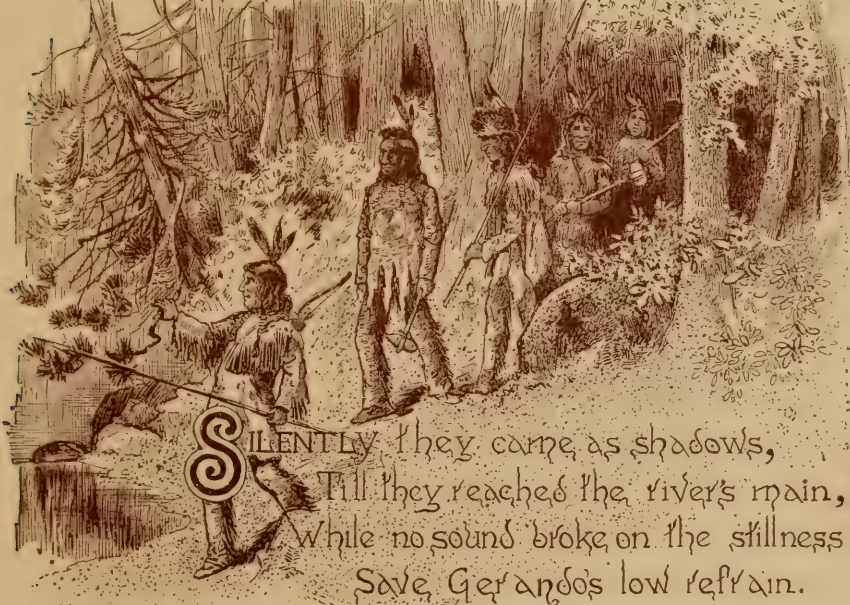
All was still that summer morning;
Silence seemed to pause and grow,
Till the forest hushed to listen
To the river singing low.



THROUGH the dark depths of the forest,
Following close the tortuous path,
Came a band of stern faced warriors
To appease their chieftain's wrath.



KILL Buck, chief of the Catawbas,
Had an oath of vengeance sworn
Gainst the young brave Messinello,
Who had dared the nation's scorn.



SILENTLY they came as shadows,
Till they reached the river's main,
While no sound broke on the stillness
Save Gerandos low refrain.



RANGED themselves in mute, dark circles
Round their captives like young form,
That stood proudly up, undaunted,
Ready now to breast the storm.



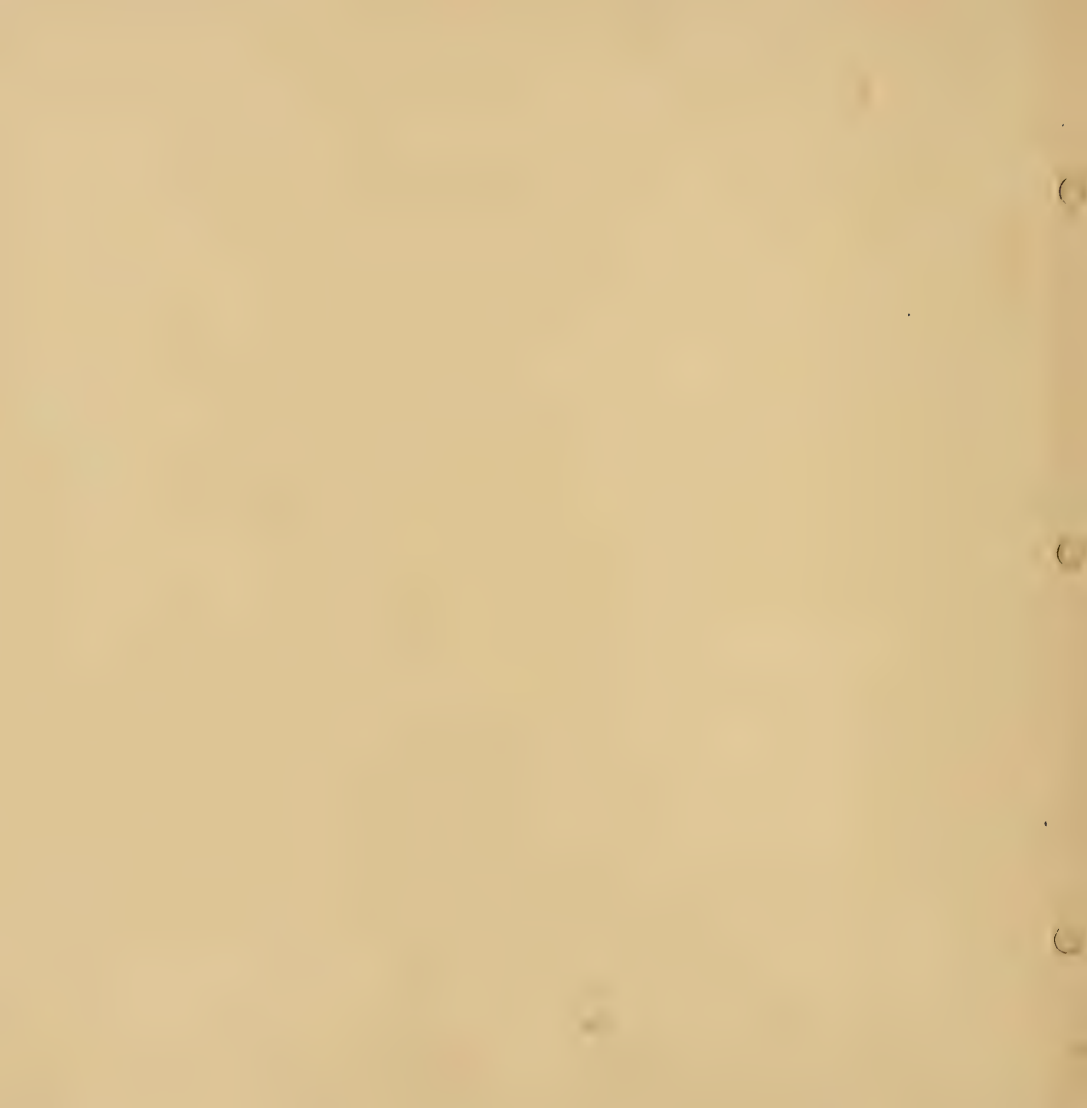
Then uprose their haughty Chieftain,
And the heavy silence broke;
Did no thrill of pity stir them,
As they heard the words he spoke.



Ye have come this day my brothers -
Twenty warriors bold and strong;
Ye shall hear the shameful story
And avenge Wahnona's wrong.



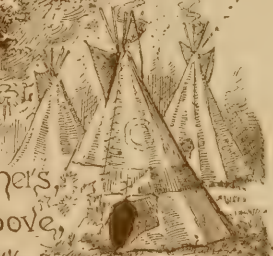
MANITO, the Mighty, hear us!
Hear the solemn vow now sworn:
(Though no Chieftain's blood shall stain us)
Death for falsehood shall be borne!

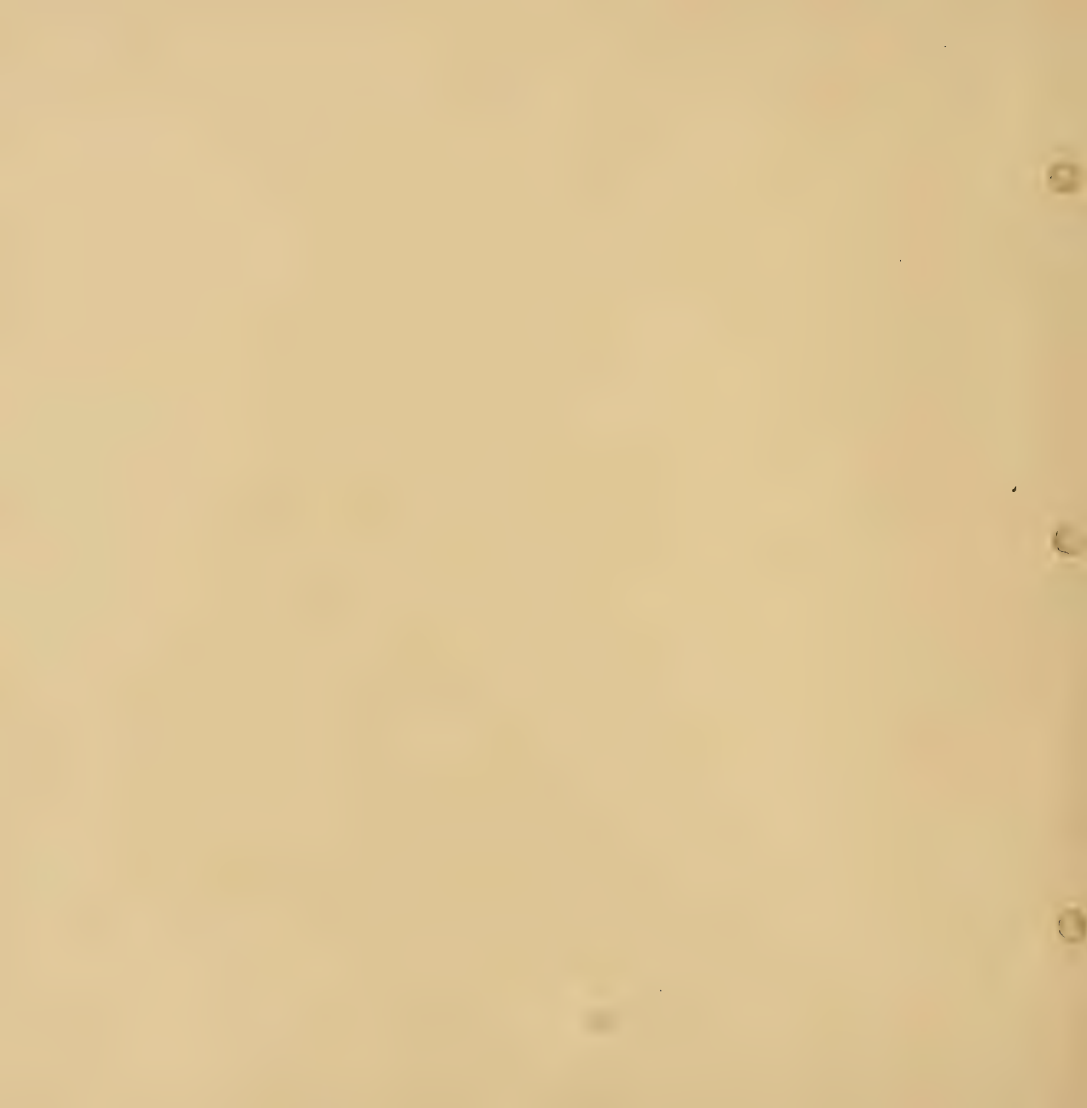


Thou wert false, Oh Messinello,
False to squaw, and sire, and race,
And thy blood, Oh Messinello,
Cannot wash out thy disgrace!

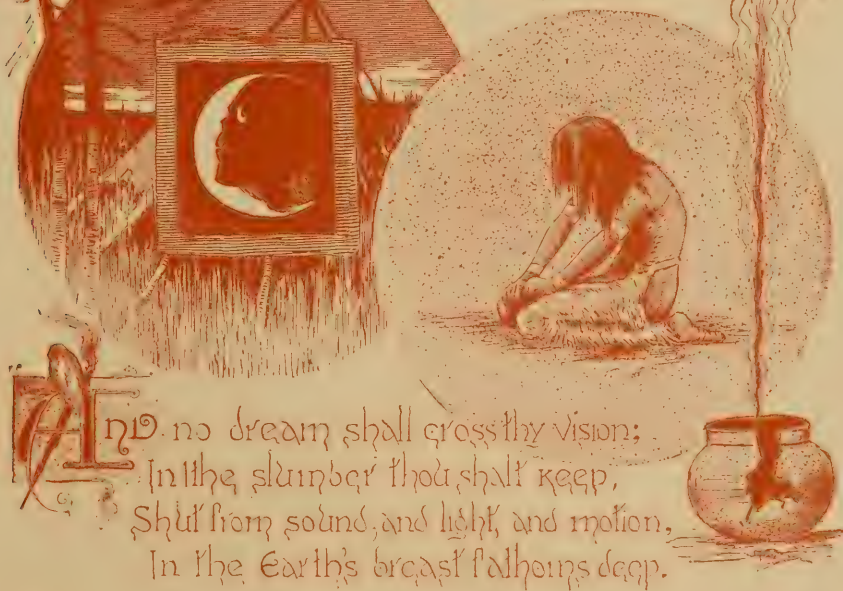


Thou hast left thy red-faced brothers,
Mated with the pale-face dove,
Bear our curse, Oh Messinello,
Endless death for faithless love!



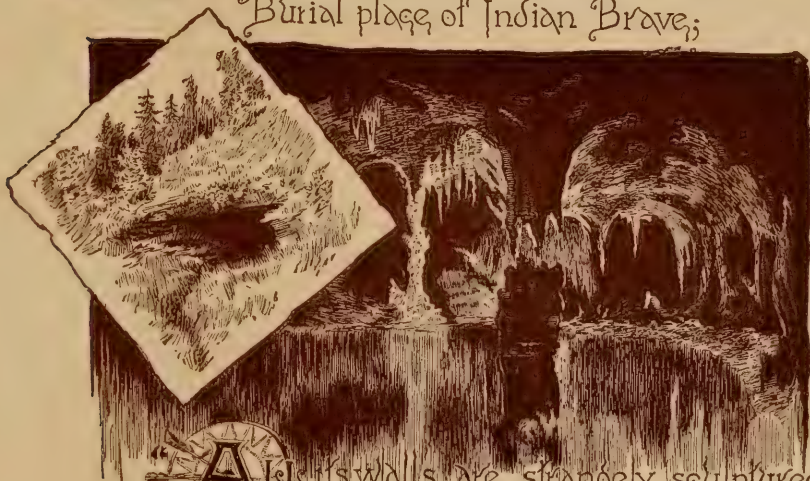


Thou shalt perish, Messineo,
Far away from name and race,
Where the smile of the Great Spirit
Will not touch thy burial place!



And no dream shall cross thy vision;
In the slumber thou shalt keep,
Shut from sound, and light, and motion,
In the Earth's breast fathoms deep.

Nearth yon hill there lies a cavern—
In its depths shall be thy grave;
All its splendors are befitting
Burial place of Indian Brave;

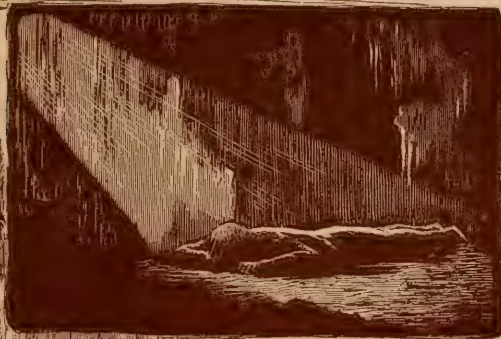


All its walls are strangely sculptured—
Column high and chasm wide;
Tis the place where all the shadows
Of the past years, silent hide.



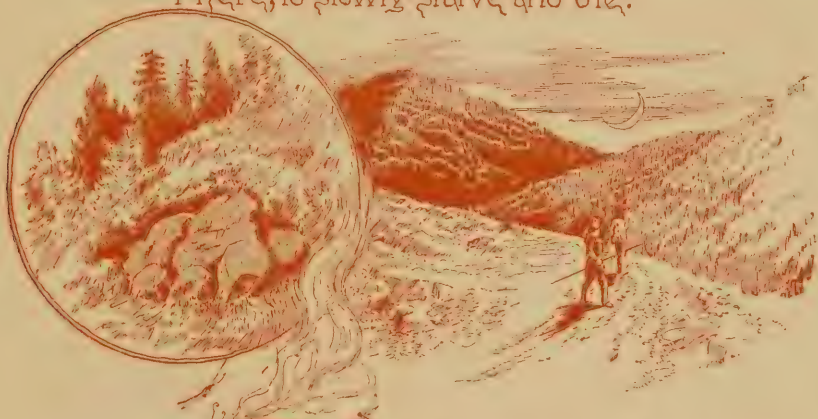


Ye have heard me now, my brothers—
Messinello's race is run;
And the oath we swear this morning
Shall be kept ere set of sun."



Then a gasping sigh of horror
Through the tree tops made them shiver,
And there crept a sound of wailing
In the low song of the river.

ER the moon rose o'er the mountain,
Hidden deep from human eye,
They had left their mute young victim
There; to slowly starve and die.



BUT that lone grave is discovered;
And to-day the hurrying tread
Of an eager throng breaks rudely
On the silence of the dead.

In the vast and solemn grandeur
Of the wondrous Luray cave,
Messingello's bones are lying
In a strange and stately grave.



This is what the river told me,
As I listened to its song—
Caught the burden of its sorrow,
Spelled its tale of love and wrong.

FINIS

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